

Cooking for One or Two People: Eating Alone

Eating alone can be difficult for people of any age. Cooking alone may seem like more work. But there are ways to put the fun back into eating. Start with keeping your cupboards full of nutritious foods that you enjoy. Studies show that when you eat with others, you eat healthier. So, sit down with some friends, family members or neighbours and enjoy their company while you dine. Treat yourself well; you deserve it!

Make it a pleasure

- Create a pleasant place to eat. Set a table with flowers, place mat and napkin, even candles. Listen to music.
- Sometimes eating in different places is helpful. Take your meal out on the porch, sit near a window or go to the park for a picnic. Enjoy a dinner out in a restaurant occasionally. Ask for a “doggie bag” to take leftovers home.
- Want a break from cooking? Try these simple ideas:
 - No-cook meals such as sandwiches, wraps or salads. A hardboiled egg, whole grain crackers, cheese and fruit makes a tasty light lunch
 - Ready-made meals from the grocery store such as grilled salmon with roasted vegetables or lasagna with a leafy green side salad.
- Use convenience food to make simple meals such as:
 - Frozen vegetables to make a stir fry.
 - Cheese tortellini heated with low sodium canned tomatoes.
 - Pre-cut fresh vegetables, such as butternut squash, to make soup.



- Consider taking Meals on Wheels a few times a week or more.

Find companions

Beyond the nutritional benefits of eating with others, starting a supper club or joining an eating group can also help you meet new people and make new friends.

- Share a potluck dinner with friends, or form a regular lunch group.
- Start an eating club, such as a SOUPer Supper Club: The host makes soup and others bring bread, salad or fruit.
- Join a collective kitchen or share cooking with friends. Find a place where a few of you can meet to plan, shop and prepare several meals together. Take those meals home, freeze them and reheat them when you don't feel like shopping or cooking.
- Ask other seniors who are alone for ideas and suggestions, and share yours.
- Exchange recipes.
- Teach your grandchildren how to cook or bake.
- Check your local senior or community centres; many serve weekly meals.

If you have lost your appetite for more than a day or two, talk with your doctor or ask for a referral to a dietitian.